AA 000795339 1
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

A WHISPER OF FIRE

"For each one of us has that within him which needs only to be kindled to become fire, and only to be blown upon to flame; and when it has blazed there is no quenching it; but it must burn and burn forever. And whatsoever it touches it makes clean; and its ashes are not dead but shall live again."

A WHISPER OF FIRE

By Agnes Ryan

Boston
The Four Seas Company
1919

Copyright, 1919, by
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

The Four Seas Press
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

SRLF
YRL
oc/9517939

CONTENTS

	Page
Wood	
The Hour Glass	11
Woman	12
Hungry-Hearted	13
Lonely Heart	14
Restore Me	15
It Is Time	16
Kindling	
The Abyss	19
A Mistake?	20
The Starry Night	21
Elemental	22
Smoldering	
Punished	25
Betrayed	26
Alone	27
My Little Fire	28
Little House	29
Desolate-Heart	30

CONTENTS

Page

Smoke

My Little Chain 33
The Riddle 34
An Iron Ring 35
Let Me Go 36
The Burning Path 37
Slipping Away 38
Children 39
Faith 40

Blaze

Listen 45
The Rose 46
Fairer? 47
Away 48
Good Night 49
Gypsy Days 50

Smoke Again

Old 53
The Home-Clutch 54
A Bonny Little Fire 55
My Pretty Hair 56
Home 57
Dead Faith 58
O Night 59
When 60

CONTENTS

	Page
Moods	61
Earth	62
Flame	
Invincible	65
Adversity	66
Brown Birds	67
An Invitation	68
My Body	69
Married	70
Tramping	71
The Taste of Fire	72
The Miracle	73
Come	74
Sympathy	75
The Savior	76
The Slayer	77
The Saddest Person	78
My Lover	79
Unmeasured	80
God-Magic	81
Coals	
Young Heart	85
Warm Hands	86
The Scythe	87
Six O'clock	88

CONTENTS

	Page
Your Footstep	90
My Garden	91
Courage	92
Church	93
The Full Ear	94
Rest	95
Coming Home	96
The Corn	97
I Wonder	98
Company	99
Ashes	
The Wind	103
Every Night	104
The Fire-Fly	105
The Bath	106
The Electric Light	107
A Seed	108
Smoke	109
My A B C's	110
Blest	111
Now You Guess	112

Wood

THE HOUR GLASS

When a woman's golden hair begins to take on
threads of silver,
When flowers and trees are budding,
When grasses start and birds are mating,
When the blood flows quickly,
And the breasts fill round and full,
When she knows there are to be no children, no
love,—
What shall the woman say to herself?

WOMAN

Woman waiting, always waiting:
Waiting for the womb to win release,
Waiting for the dead to be brought home,
Waiting for Love to come, for Love to speak,
Waiting for a letter, a face, a message,
Counting the still hours of the night.
Waiting, always waiting: It is hard to be a woman.

HUNGRY-HEARTED

Brown-bosomed Italian mother,
Hold close the tender babe upon your breast.
Drink deep the subtle ecstasy of little
Hands caressing your tired face.
Warm lips are drawing life and giving it.
Drink deep the subtle ecstasy,
And know how hungry-hearted spinsters envy
you.

LONELY HEART

Big world and crowds of people,
Yet none says: "Thou art all the world to me."
In the big world's crowds
The heart aches from loneliness and many voices.

RESTORE ME

Brown Earth, take me and warm me;
Soothe me, caress me, show me thy beauty.
Do not forsake me; I have no other.
Brown Earth, my heart grows cold.

IT IS TIME

It is time you came.
Where are you—
The other part of me?

You who love as I love,
Loving all of me,
You who feel as I feel,
Being one with me?

Kindling

THE ABYSS

The lips go pale and falter,
The hands tremble and turn cold,
The eyes quiver and see not,
The whole frame shakes
Like a mighty ship about to sink;
For the eyes of Love seek mine.
There is strange silence. Eternity yawns.
Is it Love or Death?

A MISTAKE?

Yesterday a man
With eyes like stars in the night
Came and stood before me.
He had lived.
Nazareth and Olivet were in his bearing.
He said, "Come now, come with me."
Yet I went not.
Does Love ever pass Love on the journey without knowing?

THE STARRY NIGHT

Yes, leave me.
I was never used to love.
Go your blithe way,
And look not back at me.
The starry night is over us.
Go swiftly, singing.

ELEMENTAL

Being woman, have you felt the surge of mighty
forces
At the little touch of man's warm hand upon your
arm?
And have you once cast all Earth's teaching from
you,
Saying, What else matters?

Smoldering

PUNISHED

Today I did it—
A hard task, long put off.
I cut out my heart
That throbs and is so warm.
I cut it out
And put it by
To wither.
I had to punish that heart.
It was bound to sing and love.

BETRAYED

Love took me down into the Bottomless Pit and
left me.
I went, not knowing where, only sure that Love
was leading . . . .
When I came to the Sun again,
The face of all the World was changed,
I was old, and Love was dead—slain by his own
hand.

ALONE

One pressed his face to mine
And held me in his arms.
He smoothed my cheek
And kissed away the rapid, burning tears.
—I never minded loneliness before.

MY LITTLE FIRE

It was night.
I went to the top of a hill
To build a little fire for love.
Of twigs and leaves I built it.
I fanned its feeble breath
Till it grew large
And the strong wind of the world
Took it up.
I thought the wind would help me,
But wantonly it blew my fire
Till there were only ashes.
I came down the hill shivering.

LITTLE HOUSE

Yes, little house, I've come home.
Hide me from hard eyes that pierce.
Shield me from words that cut.
Open the windows to the song bird,
To the clear breeze and the sun.
Show me the fragrant night and the stars.
And now build a little fire
Where I may read and muse.
Hide me, little house,
And let the tears come as they will.

DESOLATE-HEART

They took me in.
They fed and warmed me.
They gave me their caresses.
And yet I am not theirs—
And they are helpless.
Desolate-Heart am I,
Desolate and lonely
As the lone pine
On yonder hill against the winter's sky.

Smoke

MY LITTLE CHAIN

There's a little chain around my neck.
I feel it, though none may see.
Some links are made of tears
And some of golden laughter.
Is it less to me because
There are more tears than laughter?
If my eyes grow dim,
Too old for seeing beauty,
I'll feel my little chain.

THE RIDDLE

The night is still,
The moon and stars look down
In quiet joy upon the wondrous earth.
The sea swells rhythmically,
The warm air throbs and lives.
My eyes look out across the sea,
Over the hills, the prairies far away,
Up through eternity's soft starlit night.
My restless nature, needing much to satisfy,
Stirs me to its turbid depths.
I moan, stretching out my human, futile hands,
"Oh, Life, what holdest thou for me?"

AN IRON RING

I wear an iron ring upon my hand
Made of every time
I want to touch your hand
And may not.
For me there is only the iron ring.

LET ME GO

Do not come with me now;
I am tired and need to be alone.
I will go away with my unquiet thoughts,
Out into the night.
Let me go alone
And cry my bitter cry
And see my bitter, barren life.

THE BURNING PATH

Oh, when I said my prayer last night
  And spoke your name to God,
Oh, then I knew, I knew Love's might—
  The burning path I trod.

And now I know the bitter woe,
  The bond who would be free.
Mine is the woe unloved ones know
  For no one prays for me.

SLIPPING AWAY

Oh, the fields are full of flowers
And the sky is full of stars,
But I'm weary, sad and lonely
    All the day.
And the world is slipping away.
Oh, the world is slipping away.

CHILDREN

Seeing a child, I always smile
And wish that all the world were children,
So I and all the world
Might always smile and so be friends.
Grown-ups so often stare and nudge,
Only the children always understand.

FAITH

Blithe have I been with you, Life,
Blithe and light-hearted;
Now will you fail me?

No child have I;
No love have I; no kin.
Frail is my body
And my heart lonely.

Blithe have I been with you,
Blithe and light-hearted,
Trusting you always.
Caught in the strife,
Others have faltered,
Others strong-hearted;
I have had faith in you,
Thinking you true.
When all was black
I lay at your feet;
I kept my faith to you,
I never doubted.

Blithe have I been,
Blithe and light-hearted.
I have so loved,
So gallantly trusted,
Giving my all.
You cannot betray me!

Blaze

LISTEN

The little leaves and all the flowers
Were telling you something today,
But you would not hear.
The birds heard it,
So did the children at play.
The wind is blowing it in at the window now.
Will you not listen?

THE ROSE

Comrade, my comrade,
You know the fragrance of the rose?
You know its strength in beauty?
The joy and warmth it gives rose-lovers?
You know?
And you are like the rose.

FAIRER?

The Sun and Wind have kissed me;
The Grass and Wind caressed me;
The Dew and Rain have bathed me;
The Stars have set my hair with jewels;
New Music from the Birds has charmed me;
And the Silences have soothed.
Do I look fairer now to thee?

AWAY

Sorrows came upon my house.
You cared; you shared,—
And oh, the difference to me!
Now joy has come
I chafe and want to tell you.
But oh, how long the days till you are here!

GOOD NIGHT

Tonight, O friend, O youth,
Tonight and every night
I put my kiss upon your brow,
My kiss that reaches you
Where'er you go, and says:
    The silent night befriend you,
    The watchful stars attend you,
    Refreshing sleep God send you,—
My kiss to keep you from all harm.
And oh, it comforts me to know
Peace will be with you when you sleep.

GYPSY DAYS

Green grasses, greenery green;
Silver birches, silvery sheen;
Streamlets running,
Plowed fields sunning,
All on a bright spring day.

Birds are singing, flowerets springing,
Wild woods ringing, glad thoughts winging,
While the heart goes gypsying away.
Glad, gladsome, joyous May!

Smoke Again

OLD

The cold rain blows outside;
The warm fire glows within;
But you in the blinding rain and wind
    Are not so cold as I.

The gray sky looks down on us;
The old hills frown on us;
But hills nor sky nor wind nor rain
    Are half so old as I.

THE HOME-CLUTCH

I love this little house.
It was here my father died.
Right here he sat and ceased to breathe.
This little room holds memories to stock a volume
brave.
Here my sister died. Here one was betrayed.
Here I bowed my head in lonely anguish.
The house is cursed and moans.
And yet I love it.

A BONNY LITTLE FIRE

One was cold and cheerless,
Roaming in the gloom.
Dim-eyed, she staggered on.
Another wandered cold and weary,
Not caring where.
Then, seeing her utter misery,
He straightway built a fire,
And called to her to warm her heart.
"Come, friend," said he, "I've built a little fire;
Come, feel its glow and warm yourself
Lest I, too, perish,"
And, oh, it was a bonny little fire!

MY PRETTY HAIR

My pretty long brown hair,
My curling waving soft brown hair,
My hair with flashing glints of gold,
Do you forsake the sunlight?
My pretty hair, you never seemed so fair
As now the streaks of gray appear,
That mark of death and gloom and fear,
Dull gray, the sign of weary care.
I brush and stroke you fondly,
My sunshot soft brown hair.

HOME

Home is where I may weep
And no one may see.
Home is where I hurt no one
And no one hurts me.
I am weary now.
Let me go home.

DEAD FAITH

When the child moved within,
Her woman heart bounded in mingled fear and joy.
She smiled, sensing the warm lips drawing milk,—
And thrilled with life eternal.

* * * * *

They laid the little form beneath the earth.
Her woman eyes were dull and cold.
She said, "There is no God."

O NIGHT

O Night that sings and croons to me,
O Wind that shouts and calls to me,
Where do you hide?

I hunt the sky and clouds about,
I try to find your fortress out,
What place you bide.

O Night that hides all day from me,
O Wind that flits across the sea—
My Love has died.

O Wind, blow low this hour for me,
Come, Night, come down and cover me—
What counts beside?

WHEN

When you can see my inmost soul
And shudder not,
Then, O my Love, come close to me!
When you can scan my meanest thought
And sorrow not,
Then give your hand to me.

MOODS

Tonight my heart is filled with grief;
My voice and breast are full of sobs and tears;
And I could beat my inner self
Against the jagged rocks of black and bitter woe
Till what is I were spent and gone
Beyond the reach of break of heart and spirit
pang.

But you are you and understand—
O strong-winged gull that flew this way one day.

EARTH

O Earth, when my body is weary,
And the life goes out of my soul,
And I care not for living or dying,
Or keeping my spirit whole,
I turn to you, the Great Mother,
And I put my breast against yours;
"Oh, take and remake me,"
I whisper, "Take and remake."
Then you take me;
I feel the warm earth life,
Your teeming strength charges through—
Till I sleep and am strong;
And to Earth, the Great Mother,
To you is my song,
To you is my song.

Flame

INVINCIBLE

Twice during this little week
The flame of life near faded out.
Twice I staked my all and saw it vanish.
Just as it flowed away for the last time,
Two flames burned up where one had been.

ADVERSITY

O little hope that leads me on,
O flame of faith in wind and storm,
You fail me now?
Today I am two living flames.
The fire near quenched awhile
Burns red more deep and strong
In bitter wind and stinging blast.

BROWN BIRDS

Listen! There's a merry brown bird
Wants to fly away,
Touching wings with you,
Touching wings with you.
"Where does she want to go?"
She wants to go anywhere,
Anywhere if you will sing,
If you will sing.
O brown bird, be merry.
Go where she wants.
Go and sing,
Go and sing.

AN INVITATION

Lover of the surging surf,
Lover of the sea,
Lover of the stars above,
Can you not love me?

Lover of the sun's glow,
Lover of the dawn,
I am blithe as winged bird,
I am fair to see.

MY BODY

Oh glad am I of a strong lithe body,
Glad it can move to my will!
Oh strong is my body,
And light is my step,
White are my arms
And firm is my flesh:
I'm a child of the air and the sun.
I am light; I can trip.
I am strong; I can grip.
I can bend, I can climb, I can run.
Clear is the eye, red is the lip.
I have health.
I have wealth.
I'm a child of the sun.
I am strong.

MARRIED

To wake in the night
And hear him breathing, breathing,
So close and warm
Beside the person that is I,—
It is so strange and sweet and new,
Like riding out alone upon the sea,
Like sitting on a rim of moon,
Fearful and ecstatic, in the sky.

TRAMPING

You and I
And a biting wind,
A hungry day
And an out-door fire;
Nuts and apples,
Maybe some corn!
Do you mind the taste of fire?
Do you mind the taste of smoke?

THE TASTE OF FIRE

Do you know the taste of fire?
The wild, elemental flavor,
The haunting, wind-scented savor,
The primal, matchless fragrance
Of food smoke-scented with wood fire?
Do you know the taste of fire?

Do you know the look of fire?
The burnt-orange, red and yellow,
The living, leaping glory
Of the mellow—
The blended orange, red and yellow?
Do you know the fire of sunset,
Do you know the fire of sunrise,
Do you know the fire of gypsies,
And do you know the hearth fire?

THE MIRACLE

Precious breath of life,
Small, marvelous body,
Dawning mind, strange little waking soul!
And can we make thee perfect—so—
Out of our bodies, at our will?
O perfect wonder!
The gods still roam the earth, for we are gods.

COME

Come into the flowery fields
With me tomorrow.
I will make you priceless chains of flowers;
I will ask the grass to talk to you.

SYMPATHY

The flowers all love me.
They know when I am sad.
When I go by they lift
Their dewy faces
To greet me and bring me comfort.

THE SAVIOR

When the mainspring of a life has snapped,
When the stars have all gone out,
And the fragrance of flowers
Hurts like the cut of a knife,
When nothing seems to matter,
It is good to work.

THE SLAYER

You see, Dear Soul of mine,
Every doubt is a stab
That leaves a hole.
How many holes
Can one heart take from another
Before it vanishes?
How can you keep me from doubting?

THE SADDEST PERSON

Sometimes I think
I am the saddest person
Alive in all the world;
And when my heart cries out
And says it surely now will break,
I lift my head and shake away the tears.
I see that I must smile
And laugh and play
Lest sadness break your heart.

MY LOVER

Do you know my lover's name?
It is Sleep, sweet young Sleep.
She awaits me every evening
More faithful far than any friend.
She holds me in her gentle arms at night,
Crooning like a young mother.
Her hands are soft as infants'.
Her white young bosom is for me alone.
Caressingly she holds me
Through every night,
And yet she never wearies me.
She frowns at Dawn
And then smiles back at me,
Asking "Hast had enough?"

UNMEASURED

Yesterday I loved you
With all my strength and heart and soul,
With all my waking and my sleeping self,
And knew that I would love you still the same
If I were dead and lay
A hundred fathoms deep within the sea,
Or covered o'er with earth a mountain high.

I loved you then with all the love I had,
But now today I love you more than that—
I love you with a love scarce dreamed of yesterday,
And marvel at the ceaseless miracle.

GOD-MAGIC

God of my long seeking,
God found in bitterest pain,
I turn to You now in my happiness
To tell You that again
I am caught up in Your love,
In the love of You and of life,
That the old glory still holds me,
That Your God-magic is on me again,
God I had looked for so long,
God I find over and over again!

Coals

YOUNG HEART

I am Young Heart—
Shall I tell you my secret?
I am Young Heart and can never grow old.
My body is like a green bow:
It bends but it will not break.

My heart is an old violin;
On it the Winds of Life play,
Making me younger all the while.
My child eyes dance
And my young feet trip the Great Highway.

I am Young Heart.
Shall I tell you my secret?

WARM HANDS

They are calling boys to battle,
Calling men to slay each other,
    Where the horses snort and rear
    And the smell of blood of mortals
    And the haunting, curdling Hell-fear
    Make them drunken savage devils,
    Make them worse than maddened cattle.

They are calling men to battle,
Boys with warm hands and white foreheads,—
Love and life—then the death rattle.
    They are calling men and boys
    In the springtime of the year,
    In the may-time and the mating.

Let me hold your hand the closer—
Some are calling, some are killing—
Are you here? Closer, closer!
Are you here?

THE SCYTHE

I am the Scythe.
All winter have I hung in the barn,
Fearing the wet and the rust.
Now I feel my edge,
And I long for the Spring—
Spring and Summer!
I wonder, Is the new tender grass
Yet started under the snow?
I hunger for it now,
With a blade sharp and unflinching.
All Winter have I heard
Its gentle swish, swish,
Sighing, sighing, as it falls.
None awaits the Spring—and the tender grass—
As do I, for I am the Scythe.

SIX O'CLOCK

Tonight when I went out to walk,
I saw the people coming home from work;
And as I met them one by one,
Their steps were lagging
And their faces gray.
The air was balmy with the faintest tinge of Spring;
The grass was waking; life filled everything.
I said, "To be free from routine—
Office work—is good
When Spring is in the air."
Then feeling in my heart
What they had suffered through the day,
I was pierced through
With stabbing thoughts to know
What lifted up my heart—this Spring—
Was that which made them listless,
Made them shirk and hate their work;
It was the very thing
Made caged-up men,
Boys, girls and housed-in women
Detest and hate good honest work.
And so I fell to mourning:

It is so good to stand erect
And breathe and smile and feel the sun;
It hurts my heart to see them, limp and pale,
Come trudging home when work is done.

YOUR FOOTSTEP

I smoothed my hair
And changed my dress
And made my mood reposeful for your coming.
I wanted you to see me as you like to see me best.

Then as the hour grew late
And you were still away,
Black thoughts of danger met and seized me:
"What—Oh, God!—what should I do
If, like our neighbor who was drowned last
week,
He never came again!"

And then once more I hurried to the window
And pressed my face against the pane,
And stayed there dumb with dread and fear
Until I heard your footstep on the walk.

MY GARDEN

This Sunday night, upon the porch,
I sit and fold my hands
And feel my garden growing.
A little sprinkle of warm rain
Falls lightly on the thirsting leaves.
The corn gives back a pleasant sound;
The vines send out a fragrance
Strange and pungent as old myrrh;
The blossoms swell,—
And all lift up their heads as if in thanks.

Indoors my lover's voice is heard
In laughter with the children.
'Twould be so easy to be glad
If I could once forget the war—

Homes like ours—wrecked;
Gardens like this—laid waste;
Books and pictures—burned;
Children—hungry and orphaned;
Boys like ours—groaning, bleeding;
Men like mine—dead, dead.

I wonder: Do other women find it hard to live today?

COURAGE

What should I do
If when your eyes met mine,
Their friendliness grew cold,
Then swiftly moved away?
What should I do?
Not weep nor grieve—not I.
But I would smile and look at you,
Smile as the mother smiles
At silvering hair,
Smile as good women smile at death,
Smile as one hearing the first earth
Re-echo in the new-made grave.

CHURCH

I go in through the arched high doorway
Down the dim cool quiet aisles,
Life holds me by the hand,
I bow my head in reverence and love.
The organ rolls out its glory,
My soul thrills and quickens,
God is revealed in perfect joy and beauty.
The warm blood mounts,
I am remade.
I never remember coming out of church.

THE FULL EAR

Watching in the dawn light—
Hear the waving corn!
Sitting lone and helpless
While a woman's spirit goes—
The green corn ripples
And the dawn wind blows.
Watching while the soul goes
Alone, afar, outborne,—
Oh, the chilling dawn wind,
Oh, the waving corn!

REST

Wind across the ocean,
I must sleep.
I will lie here in the grass;
You can soothe me as you pass,
Wind from off the deep.
Will you cool my burning brow,
Stay my hands and teach them how
To take delight in rest?
Stop my feet
And still my thoughts
From a feverish quest?
Wind of ocean,
Help me rest!
Soothe me, help me face anew
The touchy world
And be my best.

COMING HOME

You say you're coming home.
Was "home" the word?
Home to me, did you say?
Ah, I had almost come to disbelieve
That it had ever been—our love.
So long the months can be,
So poignant was my loneliness.
I had grown so used to being left alone,
I almost thought it all a dream—
Our being here together.
I did not know how deep had been the silent ache
Until I read your words today:
"I'm coming home regardless of the work."

THE CORN

The rain is over
And I must hoe the corn.
The tassels soon will be showing;
The reddening silk will peep out of the ears,
And the milk will flow into the kernels.
Each stalk is like a maiden
Coming to womanhood.
The sewing and the other work
Will have to wait.
The growing corn needs the hoe
To let air and sun and moisture
Down to the roots.
Then the kernels will fill
Full of sweet white milk.

I WONDER

Do people find it very strange
When they put coal into a range
That it becomes alive?
And do they marvel that the black and dead
Can come to life and be so red?

COMPANY

They came;
They stayed to dinner and to tea;
We talked and read aloud
And sat about;
Then talked some more.
Once or twice I thought:
It is so pleasant to have
Folks come to see us;
We must have them oftener.

Then in a while they went—
Out into the frosty night,
Beneath the stars,
Crunching the crisp snow,
To take a train.

We closed the doors and windows,
Banked the fires for a long winter's night,
Put out the lights
And thought: How good to be alone again!

Ashes

THE WIND

Wind among the floating clouds,
Wind among the trees,
Tell me of your journey's end
To the far-off seas.

EVERY NIGHT

Every night I put my arms around my neck
And smoothe my hair
As anyone who loved me dear might do.
And when I'm nearly off to sleep
I say a prayer
And wish that every child might have
Some one to love her too.

THE FIRE-FLY

Fire-fly, Fire-fly,
Let me see your lantern.
Will your light go out in rain?
I will let you go again;
I won't cause you any pain.
Fire-fly, let me see your lantern.

Do you carry gas or oil?
Have you battery—lightning coil?
Is it wood or coal you burn?
Did it take you long to learn?
Tell me where you keep your matches.

Are you made of bits of moon?
Is your lantern on your shoon?
Won't you come again till June?
Please to let me see your lantern.

THE BATH

Water on my eyes and mouth,
Water on my ears,
Water on my neck and brow—
I am bathing in the sun—
Water in my arm-pits,
Water on my arms,
Water on my feet and legs—
Morning, let me splash and play,
Morning, keep the day away—
Water is such fun!

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT

When it is night
And I go in the house,
I pull a little cord
Or press a button
To make it light.
Then, for an instant, while the place is dark
And still as any mouse,
I hold my breath and—Hark!
A little click, a spark—
And all the room is bright.
But how it works,
Or whence it comes,
Or whether God or man
Has made its magic,
I do not know nor can
I find the meaning of the miracle.

A SEED

A little seed put in the ground—
There is no sign of life.
The seed seems dead as dead can be;
If one should cut it with a knife,
He'd see how dead a seed can be.

A little water, sun and air,
Some magic from the soil;
Then something at its very core
Begins to move
And it is dead no more.
It feels the sun;
It sips a drink;
It almost seems to stretch and think;
And from the soil and sun and air
It draws whatever they will share
To make a radish, carrot, beet,
Or something else as good to eat.

SMOKE

It is so cold out-doors today
There's not a single child at play,
And from the house across the way
Rises a thin wisp of smoke.
It is so quiet in the house—
What was that—Was it a mouse?
I think it is a year since anybody spoke.
The cat sleeps on; she never woke.
There is a splendid icicle outside—
My sled—But it's too cold to slide.
The only thing that's moving is the smoke.
Where does smoke come from?
Where does it go?
If I could follow some smoke
Before it got lost or melted or broke—
There! There! Oh, where does it go?

MY A B C'S

It is so wonderful
To put together
The funny little letters
To make a word;
And then again
The funny little words
To tell a thought, and bring
A kindling of the eye,
A flush upon the cheek,
To let one know
The sudden alchemy of heart and mind.
It is so wonderful
And I have marvelled much
Since learning A B C'S.

BLEST

What have I done
  And who am I
That I should have
  Such good supply
Of gladness in the sun?

NOW YOU GUESS

Snow and ice and running water—
Which is the wonderfulest of these three?
She of the window-pane, Jack Frost's daughter,
She is most wonderful to me.

To draw the patterns on the pane
Perhaps she takes a pencil from the fairies.
Who knows?—Maybe she simply moves her cane
Across the glass to make some leaves and grass.
Some say it is a magic brush and paint she carries,
Over seas, over hills, over prairies,
Upon her journeys in the frosty winter night.
And then again, they say, perhaps she blows her breath,
Like mimicking the wind
As it comes whirling, curling,
Across the frothing billows,
Across the rolling hill-tops,
And the bare, flat plain.

How does she make the patterns on the pane?
I do not know the secret. None the less
I have tried and tried again
To make it plain.
Now it is your turn to guess.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 795 339 1